Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph starting on page 1, line 24 and extending to page 2, line 2 with the following amended paragraph:

--Personal information management can be defined as the ordering of information through categorization, placement, or embellishment in a manner that makes it easier to retrieve when it is needed. It may also involve information related to coordination and collaboration. Email is increasingly used by many users for many information management (IM) functions. Currently, email clients such as Microsoft Outlook™ do have features that support many IM functions. However, these features are not easy to use and are not well integrated with email. Thus, there is a need for an email client with embedded IM features, or more generally, a message-based system with ~~with~~ embedded IM features.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at Page 7 with the following amended paragraph:

--Each information item in a thrask can have metadata associated with it in the system of the present invention. The metadata include message-related information such as sender, subject, date, priority, and task-related information such as deadline, reminder, who is responsible for action, which thrask (or thrasks) the item belongs to, etc. In certain applications of the present invention, a thrask can be implemented as a thread of messages ~~only or~~ only, or just a single message or a single document that is augmented with information management features and with easy access to useful associated options. For example, a thrask can be implemented as a thread that has some of the task-related metadata described herein. These data go beyond the simple mark-up of importance or follow-up marks used in other messaging tools to include ~~any of;~~ any of: denotation, directly in the display of flow of messages and other items, of who has obligations, when they are due and reminder and deferral functions, plus access to useful response options

of responses directly from items having or system triggers based on these metadata). metadata. A thrask may also be implemented as a message that has some task-related metadata and options in addition to ordinary message-related data as described in the preceding sentence. sentence.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at Page 13, line 14 with the following amended paragraph:

--FIG. 6 shows how TaskMaster responds to the user event "user clicks on a thrask". TaskMaster receives the user vent user event (block 602). If this thrask is already selected, TaskMaster exits (block 604). If the thrask is not already selected, TaskMaster finds all items that are marked as members of the thrask (block 606), fills the item list pane P2 with these items (block 608), selects the newest item in P2 (block 610) and simulates the event of user clicking on the newest item (block 612).--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at Page 17, line 15 with the following amended paragraph:

--FIG. 12 shows enlarged and normal views of warning bars. These three bars could be displayed to the right of each thrask name in the thrask list pane P1 (FIG. 10), to show the nearest upcoming deadline and reminder and imminent removal from TaskMaster's store of thrasks. Here the upcoming deadline is shown as dark blue at the top, the reminder is shown as medium blue in the middle, and the impending removal is shown as light blue at the bottom. This warning bars display is an abstraction of the items of the thrask, since thrask. Since the system only indicates the "nearest upcoming" deadline or reminder with one of the bars, other deadlines and reminders associated with other items in the thrask are not visible in this embodiment. However, an alternative embodiment could show more deadlines and reminders than only the nearest, or indicate upcoming deadlines only and not reminders.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at Page 19, line 18 with the following amended paragraph:

--Column 1420 is the related documents column. This column shows which messages have attachments and which items are or have been attached to enclosing messages. Clicking on the "this is a related or an attached or enclosed document or link" ~~icon 1421~~ icon 1422 (two rectangular shapes overlayed) and "this message has attachments" (paperclips) icons 1421 in column 1420 retrieves related items (e.g., enclosing messages or other versions of the same document) and attachments respectively. This is needed because the user may have deleted or moved the related document or enclosure in TaskMaster. If the user has deleted a related item from TaskMaster and Outlook altogether making it unretrievable, the icon is greyed, as shown for the second item from the top. Clicking on the "versions" icon (two curved arrows in a circular formation; which only appears next to documents) retrieves previous versions of the same document (in FIG. 14, the second item from the top is a version, but the grayed document item indicates that related versions have been irretrievably deleted).--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at Page 22, line 15 with the following amended paragraph:

--The user never has to open any item in TaskMaster to deal with it because the ~~item list pane P3~~ item list pane P2 will have buttons for all individual item-related functions at the top. However, should users wish to open items, only email messages, which are displayed by TaskMaster may still have these functions as buttons. Other items may be opened by Microsoft Office applications such as Word, PowerPoint and Excel. However, in an advanced embodiment of TaskMaster, all productivity applications' documents can be opened within TaskMaster and maintain their function buttons and metadata state records, which would be tracked by TaskMaster.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at Page 31, line 19 with the following amended paragraph:

--Also coupled to the bus 1901 is a display 1904 and a pointing device 1905. The pointing device 1905 may be a stylus, mouse, track-ball or other cursor control device. The network ~~connection 1908~~ connections 1910 provides means for attaching to a network, e.g., a Local Area Network (LAN) card or modem card with appropriate software. Such access may be to the Internet or to local Intranets or both. Besides communication access, the network ~~connection 1908~~ connection 1910 may be used to access various resources (i.e. servers) such as shared computing, storage or printing resources.--